

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5834

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, February 28, 2003

Title: An act relating to college and university fee exemptions for veterans.

Brief Description: Revising the definition of "veteran" for purposes of college fee exemptions.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Winsley, Schmidt, Swecker, Stevens, Oke, Mulliken and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/28/03 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Fairley, Kastama and Reardon.

Staff: Ronda Larson (786-7429)

Background: The governing boards of Washington public institutions of higher education may waive all or a portion of tuition and fees for particular categories of students, including state employees, veterans, and members of the Washington National Guard.

Upon the recommendation of the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the 1992 Legislature made all tuition waiver programs permissive and variable. The community college system chose to grant partial waivers to all students in all waiver categories. Each of the four-year institutions has developed its own methodology for granting the variable and permissive waivers.

In 2002, the University of Washington granted 20 tuition waivers to veterans of the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars. The tuition waived for these 20 students was \$37,000. The total tuition waived in 2003 for all categories in the University of Washington's waiver program was \$43 million. The University of Washington can waive tuition in an amount up to 21 percent of its gross operating revenue.

The definition of "veteran" for purposes of the tuition waiver program excludes veterans who have not served during a period of war or during several specified armed conflicts.

Summary of Bill: The definition of "veteran" is expanded for purposes of the tuition waiver program. The new definition does not require a veteran to have served during a period of war. Among those who have not served during a period of war, the new definition includes members of the armed forces who have fulfilled their initial service obligations and members of the Coast Guard and armed forces reserves who have been called up for at least 180 total days.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: No one.